

## REAL WORLD APPLICATIONS OF ACEs AND EMERGING RESEARCH

Efforts led by the Family Policy Council, Community Public Health and Safety Networks and other partners to share research about brain science, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and resilience has increased communities' capacity to alleviate the epidemic of childhood trauma, and has resulted in a number of practice changes in neighborhood and institutional settings. Instances of service providers and educators putting theory into practice are inspirational and transferable. Some examples include:

- One nursery school boy was expelled for throwing a chair at a teacher. Another, born to a drug-addicted mother, was aggressive and non-communicative. At Safe Harbor Crisis Nursery in Benton County, work with the local Community Network and familiarity with ACE research has welcomed such children, generated trauma sensitive training and [bilingual materials](#) for parents, volunteers and staff, and has led to funding for a "Slaying the Dragon" program that teaches calming techniques without the use of punitive discipline. The first boy now uses a "soothing song" when he gets agitated. The other, after more than three years, is now speaking and responding. [Read more.](#)
- Residents of public housing move often between small, scattered complexes with long waiting lists. They lose a sense of belonging and memory associated with place. When a Snohomish Public Housing Authority manager, also a member of the Snohomish Community Network, attended a presentation by Dr. Pauline Boss sponsored by the Family Policy Council, she developed simple solutions to counter what Dr. Boss calls "ambiguous loss"—when problems without closure come from outside of our selves. New protocol, such as welcoming new families and creating photo collections, involve residents in creating positive experiences and taking leadership initiative.
- Jefferson County Public Health and the Community Network are in the same building, so it is not surprising that Family Policy Council efforts to disseminate information about ACEs have influenced the health department's work. With money from a local philanthropy, one versed in ACEs through the Network, [Family Health Services](#) has revised its client intake form to include questions about ACEs. This process has created opportunities to discuss sensitive issues with parents, gain a better understanding of clients' needs, target the most vulnerable populations, and provide more effective referrals—all without increasing the length of visits or the staff's workload. Read how ACEs fits into Jefferson County Public Health's [Planned Performance Measures for 2011](#).
- Elementary students in Tacoma come from diverse and often stressful backgrounds. In one classroom, there is a teacher tuning into pupils who have experienced trauma. The Tacoma Urban Community Network funded this teacher's training in the "Mind Up" curriculum to create a trauma sensitive classroom where, for example, a girl with math anxiety who is the daughter of a single, methamphetamine-addicted mother can employ calming techniques to help her pass a math test. Students engage in lessons that teach them about the brain and discuss examples of trauma's impacts. It helps them be more focused, attentive and mindful. Less time is spent on discipline.
- In the Spokane area, whole schools have begun to shift their assumptions about student behavior as a result of the local Community Network's education and outreach efforts. This has not only changed how schools react to students who "misbehave," it has also stimulated interest in social and emotional development and learning (SEL) among school district leaders. One district has discussed revamping its disciplinary policy in light of ACEs and another is looking at complex trauma as the foundation for building a [new social and emotional learning curriculum](#).